



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Last week, Governor Janet Napolitano and U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff signed a Memorandum of Agreement to move forward with the development of Arizona's 3-in-1 enhanced driver's license. This is a great step forward in finding options for travelers to use as identification that meets the requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Beginning January 31, 2008, all adult travelers will be required to present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, and proof of identity, such as a driver's license, when entering the United States through land and sea ports of entry. This is in preparation for full the implementation of WHTI, which could happen anytime between January 2008 through June of 2009.

The 3-in-1 enhanced driver's license will serve as a valid Arizona license, in addition to being an acceptable form of identification for flying and crossing land ports of entry within the Western hemisphere satisfying the requirements of the WHTI. Additionally, the enhanced license can serve as a more affordable alternative to traditional passports for travel in the Western Hemisphere.

The Arizona tourism industry applauds Governor Napolitano and Secretary Chertoff in this advancement towards facilitating travel. Governor Napolitano has always been a great proponent of the tourism industry. Napolitano has consistently supported the U.S. government's need to increase security at ports of entry and has advocated for the technology to do so, while promoting the facilitation of travel and trade to and from the United States.

AOT continues to communicate news on all the new developments about the WHTI through various means, including the agency's Web sites and commenting on proposed rules in the Federal Register when appropriate. Updates on WHTI are available on www.arizonaguide.com and AOT comment letters are available on www.azot.gov under bi-national projects.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Arizona Tourism University (ATU) Presents How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy Workshop

ATU, the educational outreach program created by the Arizona Office of Tourism, is designed to educate statewide tourism organizations on tried and true tourism marketing tactics and the latest developments in the industry. The ultimate goal of ATU is to give communities the tools and resources they need to successfully develop their own tourism programs and to effectively work in partnership with AOT. The “How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy” is a dynamic session that will present a wide range of interactive/online marketing topics in an easy to follow and practical format. Discussions will include fundamentals such as Web site basics, online advertising, e-mail campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), measuring campaigns as well as best practices and useful interactive marketing tips. In addition, the workshop will cover advance topics including trends in social networking, mapping, Web site analytics, user-generated content and video. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

December 13, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Cochise College Benson Campus

Room 113

1025 State Route 90

Benson, Arizona 85602

AOT Announces New Target Cities Campaign

Every year AOT executes an advertising campaign in selected target cities to complement the agency’s nationwide campaign. While the National campaign’s objective is to create awareness of Arizona, the Target Cities campaign is to initiate action among consumers in selected cities and encourage them to visit Arizona. The Target Cities are chosen each year through a meticulous combination of statistics and indices including: propensity to travel, flight data and flight costs, visitation data, consumer spending, cost per media, competitive media and propensity towards Arizona activities. Based on the combination of this research and other tactics, the selected Target Cities for 2008 are **Chicago, Detroit, Denver, San Francisco, and Los Angeles**. For more

information about AOT's Target Cities campaign, please contact Elysia Labita 602-364-3705 or via e-mail at elabita@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

AOT to Conduct Sales Mission in Mexico

Mexico is one of Arizona's most important international markets. To further increase awareness of the Grand Canyon State, AOT will coordinate a sales mission to Mexico in February 2008, which is open to participation. Each year, the Arizona Office of Tourism coordinates a sales mission to reach out to the second tier cities in Mexico – cities that aren't typically reached through the agency's other promotions. This year AOT will target three cities in Northern Mexico including Chihuahua, Monterrey and Culiacan during a five-day mission scheduled for the week of February 25 – 29, 2008. AOT will host breakfast seminars in each city and invite local travel agents and tour operators to attend. For additional information and to obtain a participation form, please contact Loretta Belonio at 602 364 3725 or via e-mail at lbelonio@azot.gov.

German Trade Show Opportunity

The Arizona Office of Tourism would like to invite you to join us at International Tourismus Boerse (ITB), the largest travel industry trade show in the world. ITB will be held March 5 - 9, 2008 in Berlin, Germany and more than 1000,000 trade visitors and 11,000 exhibitors from 180 countries are expected to attend. ITB is not an appointment show; however, Arizona's representatives in Germany do schedule appointments with German, Austrian and Swiss tour operators and media representatives. Participation fees are (excluding travel): DMOs: \$2,000 for the primary delegate and \$500 for the second delegate. Suppliers: \$1,500 for primary delegate and \$500 for the second delegate. Please contact Loretta Belonio at 602 364 3725 or via e-mail at lbelonio@azot.gov, if you are interested in attending.

French Sales Mission Opportunity

The Arizona Office of Tourism will be conducting a three day sales mission to France in March 2008. The mission will take place immediately following the International Tourismus Boerse (ITB) in Berlin and will be made up of trade and media appointments in a major city, followed by an event in Paris which will be attended by key trade and media representatives. Arizona welcomed 72,000 French visitors in 2005 so the mission will be an excellent opportunity to further highlight Arizona as a destination to this important European market. The cost to participate will be: (excluding travel) DMOs: \$1,500 for the primary delegate / \$500 for the second delegate. Supplier Organizations: \$1,000 for the primary delegate / \$500 for the second delegate. For additional information or a participation form, please contact Loretta Belonio at 602 364 3725 or via e-mail at lbelonio@azot.gov.

Vancouver Trade Show Participation and Brochure Distribution Opportunity

AOT invites you to exhibit at the Vancouver Golf & Travel Show in Vancouver, BC February 16- 17, 2008. This consumer show expects to attract more than 20,000 Canadian golf enthusiasts over three days. Space is limited. The cost is \$800 plus travel expenses and shipping expenses. Additionally, AOT is offering the opportunity to have your brochures distributed for \$200, plus shipping. Please call for details. Space is limited. If you are interested in participating in this event, please contact Kristy Swanson at kswanson@azot.gov or call 602-364-3696.

Toronto Trade Show Participation and Brochure Distribution Opportunity

AOT invites you to exhibit at the Toronto Star Golf & Travel Show in Toronto, Ontario, February 17-29, 2008. This consumer show expects to attract more than 30,000 Canadian golfers over three days. Space is limited. The cost is \$800 plus travel expenses and shipping expenses. Additionally, AOT is offering the opportunity to have your brochures distributed for \$200, plus shipping. Please call for details. Space is limited. If you are interested in participating in this event, please contact Kristy Swanson at kswanson@azot.gov or call 602-364-3696.

Industry News

U.S. Reminds Travelers of New Document Rules

The Department of Homeland Security and the State Department are reminding the traveling public that as of Jan. 31, 2008, all adult travelers will be required to present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, and proof of identity, such as a driver's license, when entering the U.S. through land and sea ports of entry. DHS will be issuing a notice in the Federal Register formally announcing the change. The change is a necessary step to prepare travelers and ease the transition to the future requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. WHTI proposes to establish documentation requirements for travelers entering the U.S. who were previously exempt, including citizens of the U.S., Canada and Bermuda. Officials have stated that U.S. travelers who don't have proof of citizenship--either a birth certificate or passport--will face secondary screening and delays at border stations while their citizenship is checked. Many citizen, tourism and business groups have strongly objected to the passport requirement for land/sea travelers and the date of implementation is not yet firm. (www.ModernAgent.com; www.ChicagoTribune.com/Travel)

Catering to the Solo Traveler

Until recently, travel options for solo travelers were largely limited to trips of the package-tour variety, with everyone thrown into one enormous group. Now that's beginning to change, says The New York Times. As travel companies look for new ways to expand business, they're increasingly courting solo travelers. Roughly one in 10 leisure travelers hit the road alone, according to data from the Travel Industry Association, and more travel companies, from specialty tour operators to individual resorts, are creating packages that cater to those customers. But despite the greater range of choices, solo travelers are still largely plagued by single-supplement charges, unless they're willing to share a room with a total stranger. Travelers who want the company of a group by day but privacy at night may be able to get around this by booking early, says the paper. (www.NewYorkTimes.com/Travel)

Study Finds Online Reviews a Powerful Tool

Do travel and other consumers use online reviews? Yes. Are they willing to pay more for high ratings? Yes. So says a recent study that found consumers were willing to pay at least 20 percent more for services receiving "excellent" or 5-star rating opposed to those receiving "good" or 4-star ratings. "These data show the importance of local service review sites in consumers' purchase process," said Steve Marshall, Research Director for The Kelsey Group. The study focused on the impact of consumer-generated reviews on the price consumers were willing to pay for a service delivered offline. The study covered hotels, restaurants, travel and other areas, according to comScore.inc. The study is based on a survey of more than 2,000 US Internet users in October 2007. Nearly one out of every four Internet users (24 percent) reported using online reviews prior to paying for a service delivered offline. Of those who consulted an online review, 41 percent of restaurant reviewers subsequently visited a restaurant, while 40 percent of hotel reviewers subsequently stayed at a hotel. More than three-quarters of review users in nearly every category

reported that the review had a significant influence on their purchase, with hotels ranking the highest (87 percent). Were the reviews accurate? The study found that 97 percent of those surveyed who said they made a purchase based on an online review said yes. Review users also noted that reviews generated by fellow consumers had a greater influence than those generated by professionals. "This study underscores the importance of providing not just good, but excellent, service if a business hopes to generate positive consumer reviews which will result in greater sales," said Brian Jurutka, Senior Director, comScore Marketing Solutions. (*Report by David Wilkening, TravelMole eNewsletter*)

Airlines Planning for Slower Growth

Several major airlines outlined plans last week to slow their growth and cut costs to deal with higher fuel prices and the prospect of an economic slowdown that could hurt air travel. Executives at some carriers also said they were actively planning for airline mergers, although they were careful not to discuss specific combinations. Moves by Delta Air Lines, Continental Airlines and Southwest Airlines to pull back on capacity growth next year could help the industry avoid an oversupply of seats, which in turn could enable airlines to more readily raise fares. So far, airlines say U.S. economic worries haven't slowed business travel. Planes are flying fuller than ever. But airlines also have been curbing domestic growth in favor of more lucrative overseas expansion, where they face less competition and have more room to keep fares strong.

United Airlines, for example, said it had no plans to expand its flying in the highly competitive U.S. market but intended to expand about 15 percent internationally over the next three years. Delta Air Lines is also looking to increase its international flying from 25 percent of capacity in 2005 to 40 percent next year. Southwest Airlines said Tuesday that it would slow its planned growth in 2008, the second time this year the low-cost carrier has reined in expansion as it struggles with high fuel costs. (*Pages A5, Wall Street Journal; C6, New York Times; 3C, Miami Herald; AP; www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business; www.ChicagoTribune.com/Business*)

Study Reveals Emerging Travel Trends

Five key trends will have a significant impact on travel industry expectations, strategies and brands in 2008, according to Deloitte's 2008 Travel Industry Trends Report. Among trends are niche travel and mini-vacations, which are a result of more and more people bypassing the traditional, two-week getaway in favor of mini-vacations of a week or less. According to the October survey, 47 percent of respondents said they take shorter vacations and fewer long ones than they used to. (www.ModernAgent.com, 12/5)